

The Plymouth Brethren Chapel

The following is an article which appeared in *The Diary* April 1980 edition. It was written by Jack Mardon who contributed several articles over the years.

A semi-detached house, with unusual windows seen on the left as one enters West Lane from the Square, was once a Brethren Chapel. It ceased to have normal religious service at about the turn of the century (1900), when it was altered into two cottages. The alterations were carried out by local builder John Hancock and son Ned who lived at Brook Cottage at the time. It is fitting that our local builder, Derek Mardon, is the Grandson of the same John Hancock. The work, so I am given to understand, was authorised by a Mrs. Carter (nee Hooper) a survivor of the Hooper family who farmed at Chapple for many years. She had left Dolton and was then living in London having married a non-conformist leader of a Christian Mission there. The Hooper family were great supporters of the Open Brethren Cause at Dolton in the early half of the 19th Century.

(William Ross was farming Chapple in 1883)

The cottage near the road was named "Rest Cottage". The inside one "Cottage of Rest". Doltonians – friends of Mrs. Carter – were the first occupants and paid little or no rent. Many of us remember, with affection, the late Miss Annie Budd who lived at Rest Cottage – rather delicate person who gratefully accepted financial help from her academic brother, Herbert Henry Budd, B.A., L.C.P., who specialised in Mathematics and ended his career as a visiting Master at Marlborough House School and at Leighton Park School, Reading. He was, of course, born at Dolton.

The cottages were sold after the Second World War to Mr. Harold Piper and after Miss Budd's death in 1959, were again sold, this time to Mr. Tom Piper and the Friend family. They were again renamed, Tom and Ada Piper Live at Myrtle Cottage and Beattie and Aubrey Friend at Fairview.

When I called to see Tom and Ada Piper I was shown the well cared for lawn and flower beds, which cover the remains of the Brethren worshippers who had died and been buried there, in the 19th Century. Headstones were respectfully placed by the west wall. Inscribed were names of the Hooper family, a John Quick who died in 1882 and Celia, third daughter of the late Henry Friend of this Parish, died 1886.

The Hooper family mentioned is the same one as mentioned in the Feb 2019 Diary, and is believed to have contributed the land for the chapel.

There are just 7 gravestones in the former burial ground, and these are all from the Hooper, Friend and Quick families, although it is known that 38-year-old Charles Chant, who died of TB was buried here in 1874 after serving just 9 months as Pastor at the Baptist chapel. There may be other burials; the Brethren didn't keep records.

The Hooper family farmed at Chapple and the Quicks worked for them there before retiring to Hackwills Cottage. The Friend family farmed at Hackwills.